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The **H** Magazine for the Christian Home
Hearthstone



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The Magazine for the Christian Home Hearthstone

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Contents

ARTICLES

We Love Christmas	Helen Giorgi	1
Christmas in France	Maurice Moyal	4
Christmas at Your Finger Tips	Robert Steffer	10
To Greet Again	Fay Kuhlman	13
Are We Getting Ahead?		
(Study Article and Guide for Parents' Groups)	Ruth Lentz	22
Hobbies Make Gift Buying Easy	Loie Brandom	26

STORIES

A Gift for Sheila	Daisy Constant Drexel	7
Story for Children		
A Doll for Christina	Charlotte Swaney	21

FEATURES

Hearthstone's Visiting Nurse	Beulah France, R.N.	8
For Christmas Decoration	Louise Price Bell	16
Worship in the Family with Children		18
Biblegram	Hilda E. Allen	25
Books for the Hearthside		29
Wilbur		30
Family Counselor	Donald M. Maynard	31
Over the Back Fence		32
Poetry Page	Inside Back Cover	

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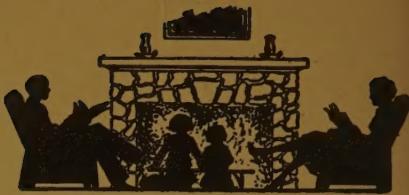
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Getting and Giving

At Christmastime, since there is so much emphasis given to "getting and giving," it might be well to spend some time considering each.

Along life's way, we have had paramount experiences of getting, such as getting the train or doll we wanted for Christmas, getting to go to school (finally), and getting "formal education." Possibly, we have had paramount experiences in giving too, when we just had to share the toy we wanted desperately to keep for ourself, or, when we first learned the joy of planning for and giving gifts from our own money, perhaps at Christmastime.

These and other experiences will affect our attitude concerning "getting and giving." What purpose does our obtaining serve? On the other hand, what purpose does our giving serve?

Looking to Christ for guidance we see that he spent a great deal of time in "getting and giving." Mark tells us that "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed." Christ had quality to give. He restored and revitalized life, meeting the needs of those around him at the point at which they needed it most.

There are steps that we can begin to take to bring our "getting and giving" more in line with Christ. May we take time to discover these as we prepare for Christmas.

In This Issue. Helen Giorgi in "We Love Christmas" shows how the family can work together in preparations for Christmas.

Read the interesting article "Christmas in France" by Maurice Moyal. He describes the different picturesque village observances of the Holiday season.

Do you think giving your wife a fur coat will settle all problems? To save you from disillusion and to warm your heart is the adult story "A Gift for Sheila" by Daisy Constant Drexel.

Ruth Lentz asks, "Are We Getting Ahead?" in the study article for parents' groups. It turns out to be a very soul-searching question both for family groups and individuals.

Every community has resources at its disposal which can be used in preparation for Christmas. Robert Steffer in "Christmas at Your Finger Tips" makes us aware of the great literature, art, and music available from most any community.

Coming Next Month: "New Year's Resolutions," "Your Family and Missions," and "The Church and the Unwed Mother."

Until then,
R. C.



WE LOVE CHRISTMAS

by Helen Giorgi

Photos from the author

When the daily papers sound the warning, "Just twenty more shopping days 'till Christmas," my next-door neighbor wrings her hands in despair.

"Oh, no!" she wails. "Not December already! To me Christmas is just a nightmare of shopping and spending and overeating."

My two youngsters turn astonished eyes on her, because our family holds to the old-fashioned viewpoint that the Christmas season brings the most delightful days of the year.

December 1 is a red-letter day in the Giorgi household. Immediately after supper, the whack-whack of woodchopping begins to resound from the back yard, and a half hour later, Vince strides through the door, carrying an enormous load of wood, his cheeks red from the unaccustomed exercise and his eyes sparkling with anticipation.

Lanny and Della chatter around him like chipmunks while he kindles a toe-toasting fire, and we all draw up close to it to munch popcorn and design our Christmas cards. Shortly after Thanksgiving Day, we have unearthed the camera for an annual record of our children's growth and we are ready to use the best snapshot on our Christmas cards.

During our "popcorn conference" some member of the family always manages to come through with a unique idea for framing our snapshot. Three years ago, our cards were miniature TV sets; two years ago, we made Christmas trees with round photos hanging like ornaments from the limbs; last year, we sent desk calendars. The handwritten message on each one is usually a variation of the theme, "May God bless your family this joyous Christmas season and throughout the year to come."

Working together at Christmastime seems to be the best way of carrying out the loving spirit of the season, and this is especially true in decorating the house. Excited giggles sound from the basement as Lanny and Della drag out the Christmas cartons and struggle up the stairs with them. Della hoists her short legs up onto the piano bench, so that she can spread cotton snow on top of the piano, and Lanny arranges the trees and choir boys into a winter caroling scene.

Christmas can be the happy, joyous occasion it is meant to be!

Next on our agenda is the manager scene for the mantel. Joseph's head has been mended with glue since he slipped out of Della's fingers two years ago, and Mary and the baby Jesus are chipped in a few places too, but we wouldn't think of buying new ones. Every year, the sight of those timeworn figurines brings back memories of the eighteen happy Christmases that have passed by since they graced the mantel of our very first three-room home.

The Saturday before Christmas, wegulp breakfast and pile into the car to find our Christmas trees, a tall one for the living room, a small one for the children's room.

That evening, our house is rich with the scent of evergreen, and richer still with the rollicking laughter of children. Big and little hands share in decorating the big tree. Little hands are clumsy, and a few ornaments break; but what a small price that is to pay for the radiance on children's faces as they hang the ornaments on the tree.



Lanny and Della make cookies under the direction of Mother. It is great fun even if more flour does get on their faces than on the cookie cutters.

Below: Lanny brings the Bible and the family sits together, to hear again the beautiful story of Christ's birth.



When the last ornament box is emptied, Vince places the star on the tiptop branch. "This is the star of Bethlehem," he says softly, "May it light our way to the baby Jesus, as it did for the three wise men almost two thousand years ago." Those words are Lanny's cue to bring the Bible from the bookcase, and we sit down together, to hear again the beautiful story of the first Christmas night when the little Lord of love was born.

Sunday, we hurry home from church to watch Lanny and Della trim their tree. Gradually the green limbs disappear behind a profusion of paper chains, whirligigs, oriental lanterns, and popcorn strings, and as Lanny hangs the "angel with real hair" on the top branch, Vince and I express our warm approval of our children's handiwork. That afternoon, we enjoy one of our many pre-Christmas caroling sessions.

At last it is Christmas week, and we begin to bake the traditional food for guests who will visit us during the holidays. Christmas fruitcakes and pies fall into my domain, but Christmas cutout cookies are a family affair, and we collect cookie cutters with the same gusto that our friends display for coin and stamp collections.

Each cookie cutter reminds us of one phase of the Christmas season: an angel and a sheep for the shepherd story; a camel and a star to represent the wise men; a sprig of holly, poinsettia, wreath and snowman to suggest winter; a Christmas package, Santa and reindeer for the joy of giving; and a bell to symbolize our church.

All day long, the small dough "pictures" go in and out of the hot oven, until the cookie jar overflows, and one of each kind is left to be frosted and tied on the tree.

A buffet supper on Christmas Eve is a long-standing custom in Vince's family, and we have served it in our home for the past four years.

Preparations begin early in the morning, when I pack a tasty potato salad into a bell mold and pour a green gelatin salad into a

star-shaped tin. Later, the salads will be turned out on cake plates and decorated with pimento and English holly. While the salads chill, a chocolate cake is baking in Christmas tree cake pans. When it appears on the buffet, it will be frosted green and trimmed with silver dragées and colored gum-drops to resemble a real tree.

The children concoct place cards from construction paper and Christmas tags, while I make a Jack Horner pie for the center of the table. Small dime-store gifts are hidden under the Christmas wrapping paper "crust" and ribbon runs from each gift to a place card, ensuring every member of the family an appropriate gift.

By the time the clock chimes six, the buffet is groaning under salads, cheeses, crackers, sea food mixes, potato chips, relishes and cake; and the fragrance of hot cof-

fee and freshly baked bread drifts in tantalizingly from the kitchen.

We sit down at the long table, improvised from sawhorses and sheets of plywood, and bow our heads to thank God for good food to eat and a loving family to enjoy it with us. We pray that we may not forget those who have less, and that we may give generously to alleviate hunger and suffering throughout the world.

Thanks to the paper plates and cups used; immediately after supper, the fourteen members of the Giorgi family all congregate in the living room for a fun-filled evening of gifts, games, and singing.

Our family is thankful that our Christmas is filled to the brim with the loving spirit of the One who gave us the pattern for a happy Christmas, when He said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Reverently, Lanny and Della lift the time-worn figures from the big shoebox.





Georgette Trigano

Gay, hand-painted santons are a part of the Christmas crèche in southern France. The santons are statuettes of the everyday people. Each brings some gift connected with his trade—and his heart—to the infant Jesus.

Christmas in France

by Maurice Moyal

We French retain many time-honored Christmas customs, colorful rites, and old carols, all reflecting the deep, steadfast faith of a very ancient Christian land. In this country, so rich in folkways, every province has, of course, its own ways of honoring the birth of Jesus.

The yuletide rites generally extend from December 24 to January 6, Christmas being a day to be celebrated at home, while New Year's Day and Epiphany give occasion for boisterous public celebrations. However, in some provinces, the Christmas festivities last much longer. Thus, in Provence, in southern France, they will start on December 4 when children place a layer of corn or lentils in a saucer filled with water. If by yuletide these have sprung tall and vigorous shoots, this will be construed as a favorable omen for the oncoming year.

In Lorraine, in eastern France, four weeks before the Feast of Feasts people hang in their homes the "advent crown" in the form of a garland of pine boughs. On each Sunday before Christmas a candle is lit in each wreath; then candles and boughs give way to the Christmas tree.

Are you aware that you are indebted to Alsace, also in eastern France, for the delightful custom of the municipal Christmas tree? As early as 1605 the public square at Strasburg, its capital, was graced with a huge fir tree, suitably illuminated and decorated for the year.

In northern France, every home has its own Christmas tree around which the family gathers to celebrate. No home, however humble be it, is without something by way of presents for the children. At the first gray light of dawn, the younger ones

will eagerly rush up to the mantelpiece to inspect the gifts put in their shoes by "Papa Noel," trembling to find instead the whip that "Pere Fouettard" is supposed to bring to the naughty ones. Needless to say, this witchlike character has trouble finding any naughty children at this particular time of the year.

In southern France, the center of the family celebrations is the Christmas crèche. It is peopled with gaily hand-painted *santons*. These statuettes of baked clay, from one to nine inches in height, feature baby Jesus in his manger, Mary, Joseph, and a whole host of plain, everyday people in their bright and picturesque national costumes. Around the crèche are "Monsu lou Maire" (His Worship the Village Mayor) complete with blue, white and red sash of office on an imposing belly; "lou Ravi" (the village idiot) and musicians playing the fife and drum at the same time; the baker, dutifully trailing behind his wife on donkeyback; the flour-besprinkled miller wearing a nightcap; the knifegrinder sharpening a

big knife on his wheel; the pretty girl from Arles, wearing proudly the towncoif, made up of two fluttering blue ribands, precious white lace neckerchief, and swirling black velvet skirts; the one from Nice in her flat straw hat, cashmere shawl, and colorful bell-shaped gown; the fishmonger with two baskets of silvery fish on her sides; the hunter bearing a bagful of wild fowl; the shepherd with a lambkin wrapped around his neck. All are bringing some small gift connected with their trade to the infant shivering in his stable. All are rendered with a childlike—but not childish—art full of charm and refreshing naïveté, carrying a strong power of suggestion. Close behind follow the three wise men from the East, flanked by their retinue of swarthy attendants on camelback.

In religious-minded Provence, in sympathy with Mary and Joseph who were sent from pillar to post by the innkeepers of Bethlehem in the course of the sad nativity night, no meat finds a place on the Christmas table. Thirteen loaves must traditionally



Marcel Coen



The Provencal tambourinaire beats his drum in accordance with a very intricate technique, that requires long practice under expert tutelage. Here an orchestra of drums and fifes serenades baby Jesus at the Christmas service, in the village of Les Baux, France.

You will want to read the special way each province in France has of honoring the birth of Jesus. In Les Baux, for example, the mystery plays are unique and have been maintained since the 13th century.



Marcel Coen

At the Les Baux Christmas service, a live lambkin, symbol of Jesus led to Golgotha, is offered up by the shepherd, Remi Grognard of the local Shepherds' Guild.

figure upon it. These represent the twelve apostles, the largest one standing for Jesus himself.

Likewise, thirteen deserts must grace the table; hazelnuts, almonds, raisins, dried apples, oranges, dates, and sweetmeats, sticky nougat, plum, quince, and grape jams, honey and the traditional Christmas cake kneaded in oliveoil and strewn with aniseeds. Everyone is to partake of all thirteen deserts for luck. The table is not cleared until the next day, so that the departed souls of the family may feast on the leftovers.

In the nearby Comtat-Venaissin, a charming custom, well in harmony with benevolent spirit of Christmas, is still faithfully observed. The family will start partaking of the meatless repast only when two poor persons have been served with the portions

set aside for them. The Benjamin of the family will be called upon to give up his sweets for some orphan. If he does so willingly, he is showered with gifts.

In religious-minded Britanny, in northwestern France, in sympathy with the predicament of the Holy Family, folks will fast for the whole Christmas Day, breaking up their fast only when nine stars begin to twinkle in the sky, to commemorate the nine months during which Mary carried Jesus. Even then, the fare will be more than Spartan, consisting solely of a small loaf and a glass of water.

The fun will start on Boxing Day, the first weekday after Christmas, when Bretons will recuperate from their self-denial. Salted butter buckwheat pancakes are consumed by the ton, together with fried eggs. A special Christmas fruitbread, kneaded in cream, will be provided. The children will have round gingerbread cakes stamped with a scene featuring the flight into Egypt, with Mary riding on a donkey, the baby Jesus in her arms, and Joseph trudging at her side, carrying on his shoulder a stout staff with a bundle attached.

As Bretons are near blood-relatives of the Irish, theirs is an old Celtic land, pregnant with poetry and legends. Here, many uncanny events are believed to take place on Christmas night. At the stroke of midnight, the huge erect stones at Carnac, the French Stonehenge, are said to revolve seven times around their bases, to honor the birth of the Savior, and then to set out in solemn procession to have a dip in the sea. Woe betide the indiscreet mortal viewing such an unearthly scene! He would be struck dead on the spot.

On that particular night, too, cruel Herodus and his henchmen, dripping with the blood of the slaughtered Innocents, are said to ride chained to their mounts. In the eerie moans of the wind, superstitious folk hear the tattoo of the ghostly hoofs and the barking of all the hounds of hell, chasing them for eternity.

In neighboring Normandy, an ancient custom, believed to be of Viking origin—the Normans are of Scandinavian descent—still holds sway. Before leaving for church, the grandfather will extinguish with great ceremony the big yule log burning on the hearth. It will be kept until next Christmas to bring the household luck. Every member of the family brings a torch to church. After the service, the torches are lit from the altarlamp and solemnly promenaded across the length and width of the family's lands, to call upon them the Lord's blessing for the coming year. The Normans will sit at a banquet-sized meal, the main element of which is a roast turkey.

(Continued on page 28)

John didn't begin to question the wisdom of asking Sheila and the children to meet him in Chicago for Christmas, until he stepped from the westbound plane, and then it was only a pin-prick of doubt.

Striding through the chill morning to the waiting room, a tall man with a grey feathering at his temples, it occurred to him it was selfish to expect Sheila to bring David and Margaret to a strange city for a holiday which had always meant so much to them.

He thought of their own green balsam tree, trimmed in the old-fashioned tradition, with friends dropping in for a visit around an open fire. He felt he couldn't face Christmas at home this year, especially since this might be his last.

Waiting for his luggage, the words of the doctor at Johns Hopkins, came back to him:

"You'll have to take it easy, Mr. Winthrop. You can live with a heart like yours, but sales work is too strenuous. This convention you have just attended in Baltimore has taken it out of you. You should have come to me first."

John gave his lopsided grin. "And lost a lot of business. I have a son, seventeen, and a daughter, fifteen, to educate, and a wife who is entitled to a few luxuries. She had it tough when we were first married."

"Most wives have it tough, as you put it, at the start, but they take the good with the bad. I'll bet your wife will see it your way when she knows."

John ignored the implication. "How long have I, doctor?"

"Maybe a year. Maybe twenty. It all depends on you."

John claimed his baggage and checked the inbound plane from Omaha. He would have time for a cup of coffee while he waited.

Sipping his coffee at the counter, he thought all doctors were the same. Where could a man, who knew only one thing, sales, relax and still make a living? The memory of the small chicken farm where he and Sheila had eked out a bare living those first years, rose to tempt him. Sheila making all



"It's much too elegant. You shouldn't have been so extravagant."

"I wanted to be. After all, don't you think I enjoy giving you beautiful things?"

"But, don't you see . . . ?"

A Gift for Sheila

by Daisy Constant Drexel

"David and Margaret, couldn't they come?"
She sighed. "I tried, John, but there were parties."
"Parties? But, it's Christmas, Sheila."

of her own clothes, and later the children's, never complaining, making a game of it. No, he couldn't ask her to start over. A man had his pride.

She knew he intended to consult the doctor while he was away, but she need not know the verdict. He had a year to get his house in order. He would use it wisely.

Back in the waiting room he glanced idly at the gifts on display in the showcase by the magazines. His big gift to Sheila, the fur coat had already been delivered and she had taken care of the children's gifts. Suddenly, he wanted to buy something extra for each of them. It was then he saw the gift for Sheila. Smiling, in

sudden remembrance, he took out his billfold . . .

He felt a tightening in the pit of his stomach watching Sheila alight from the plane. She's so lovely, he thought, as her quick step brought her to him and into his arms.

"Hello, darling. Merry Christmas!" She stood on tiptoe for his kiss.

"Hello, yourself." John's arms tightened around her. He needed her closeness, her bright laughter, her warmth. "David and Margaret, couldn't they come?"

She sighed. "I tried, John, but there were parties."

"Parties? But, it's Christmas, Sheila."

She smiled up at him. "Yes, I know, darling, but you didn't give us much time. It was Margaret's first formal dinner party, and David has a house guest."

"Who's with them?" He managed to hide his disappointment,

"Mrs. Evans. She's very dependable, John."

Waiting for Sheila's luggage, John said, "I'd counted on Christmas with my family."

She laid a gentle hand on his arm. "I'm here, remember?" He was ashamed. She might have had plans, too. He could have gone home if he had not been a coward, afraid to face his family and friends in familiar surroundings because of this new knowledge.

Before "God gave his only Son" he asked an angel to tell Mary: "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! . . . for you have found favor with God . . . you will . . . bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."

God had given Mary his holy spirit, a sound mind, and a healthy body. He had bestowed upon her humility, understanding, deep devotion to her heavenly Father with unquestioning obedience to his will. From God she had received the great gifts needed to be the mother of Christ.

"And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."



BEULAH FRANCE, R.N.

Hearthstone's Visiting Nurse

That first Christmas Day "they . . . found . . . the babe lying in a manger."

Newborns now arrive in sterilized surroundings, receiving professional attention. Modern mothers are supervised by physicians throughout pregnancy. Frequent medical tests are made. Special diets are prescribed. Weight is carefully controlled. Good health is maintained.

Proper preparation for delivery and aftercare are made. Recovery is watched and guided. As a result of all these precautions, many mothers live to become great-grandmothers, too. But until God showed doctors how to safeguard motherhood many lost their lives and their

babies.

They took a cab to the hotel where he registered with a feeling of misgiving. The elaborate plans for their Christmas celebration, which he had wired to the hotel yesterday, would look foolish for two. He wished he could feel the Christmas spirit. They followed the bellboy to the elevator.

It was just possible he'd feel more like Christmas when they were alone in their own suite. They got off on the tenth floor

He laid his packages under the tree before he spoke.

"Just some little things I picked up."

"Let's open them, now, John. I told the waiters we didn't want dinner just yet."

"Whatever you say, Sheila." He wished he could get rid of that awful tightening in the pit of his stomach.

and followed the bellboy down the corridor.

"Here we are, sir." The boy moved ahead of them into the rooms, turning on lights and adjusting luggage racks. John tipped him and he left.

When John went into the sitting room to join Sheila, he saw the tree he had ordered. He shuddered. It was dead white and it was trimmed with blue lights. An iciness to match their brilliance settled around his heart. Sheila liked a green tree with multi-colored lights.

"It's lovely, John," she said, but there was no warmth in her voice. "I think I'll unpack." She went into the bedroom.

John sat down on the divan. His mind had scuttled aimlessly about all of the time he had been in the air last night. He was tired. More tired than he could remember. He stretched out and slept.

When he awoke it was evening. He sat up and saw Sheila across the room. She looked up from the magazine she held. "Have a good rest, darling?"

John stretched. "Why didn't you waken me?"

"You looked so tired I hadn't the heart. Besides, I had some errands. Last minute shopping." She smiled, mysteriously.

"On Christmas?"

"I found the most resourceful girl at the gift counter in the lobby. She had just what I wanted."

John sensed a change in her. An expectancy. She hadn't asked

about the verdict at Johns Hopkins. She was waiting for him to tell her.

There was a knock at the door. It was two waiters with a table and folding chairs. "Are you ready for your dinner, sir?" One of them asked.

He had forgotten to change the order. "Oh, yes, the dinner. Put the table in front of the fireplace, but there'll be only two instead of four."

"A smaller table, perhaps?"

"Good idea." Sheila returned to her magazine but John felt her eyes upon him. He looked at the tree and saw the packages under it and remembered his own. He left the room.

When he returned, the waiters had gone and Sheila was standing in front of the tree. Her red hostess gown against the white tree gave him his first feeling of warmth. He laid his packages under the tree before he spoke. "Just some little things I picked up."

"Let's open them now, John. I told the waiters we didn't want dinner just yet."

"Whatever you say, Sheila." He wished he could get rid of that awful tightening in the pit of his stomach.

"I haven't thanked you for the coat, John. It was very beautiful." Her voice sounded like it had when she'd looked at the Christmas tree.

"Why didn't you wear it?"

"It's much too elegant. You shouldn't have been so extravagant."

"I wanted to be. After all, don't you think I enjoy giving you beautiful things?"

"But, don't you see, darling. I don't need expensive gifts. Just being your wife has always made me feel beautiful, inside."

He smiled. Sheila had always been that kind of wife. Asking little and giving much. "You're a dope and I love you." He reached under the tree and handed her her package. "This is—it's just—I saw it and it reminded me of something."

Sheila opened it. She smiled through her tears. "They're just what I'll be needing, John. How did you know?" She lowered her eyes.

"I wonder if I've lost my touch. That small, flat package. Open it, will you?"

John tore open his package and found a gift certificate. As the printed form came into focus the sense of Sheila's closeness was overwhelming. She knew and he was glad.

He took her in his arms. "Merry Christmas, darling."

She leaned against him and sighed. "The same to you."

"Careful!" he said. "Don't cut my gift with those pinking shears." He couldn't remember when he felt so good. It was a new kind of feeling which held a challenge. He would need a lot of time to use up Sheila's gift, and, God willing, he would be granted that time. He folded the paper carefully, a ten-year subscription to *Modern Methods of Poultry Raising*.



At Your Finger Tips

by Robert Steffer

"Well, it's Christmas time," we say the Sunday after Thanksgiving. "You can tell we're off again! At church today Rev. Brown spoke about preparing spiritually for Christmas."

At this advent time, take your family on an adventure. Look together into the numberless possibilities for enriching Christmas through art, music, and literature, with the purpose of being more prepared to observe that greatest day of days.

Where can one find art reproductions, music, and legends? What can we do together that will enrich our family's observance of Christmas? Here are some answers.

There are excellent books for all ages containing many suggestions for Christmas. *Christmas Annual* (a new one each year), edited by R. E. Haugen; *Christmas in the Home*, Nos. 1 and 2, edited by Glenn McRae; *Christmas Ideals*, are three popular examples. A good book for children, *Merry Christmas*, is beautifully illustrated and contains stories, poems, and songs. This book is out of print, but may be found in public libraries. *All About Christmas*, by Mayme Richardson Krythe, is another helpful book.

If you, or the neighbors next door, have a slide projector and record player, you may want to obtain

the sound filmstrip, "Making Christmas Christian."¹ This shows ways in which the family can make Christmas a deep Christian experience.

There is no dearth of writing on the subject of Christmas. The Scriptures are the appropriate place for the family adventure in advent reading to begin. The infancy narratives of Jesus' genealogy and birth, the visit of the wise men, and the flight and return may be found in the first two chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew.

The story of the birth of John the Baptist, the annunciation, another account of Jesus' birth describing the shepherd's visit, and the childhood of Jesus are recorded in the Gospel according to Luke. A reading of these accounts from a Bible containing cross references and footnotes will be helpful in understanding the text. Interpretations of the Christmas story, such as *Jesus of Nazareth* by Norman Vincent Peale can be found in most of the November and December issues of newsstand magazines.

Many books of worship contain Christmas prayers, sentences, and litanies. The church hymnal will have Christmas responsive readings, and will be another help in preparing spiritually for Christmas.

A few minutes spent in the public library will

¹Available from the publishers of this magazine.



Religious News Service Photo

A journey to the local art center or historical museum may reveal Christmas displays of great art. Here we see "Journey of the Magi" by Stefano de Giovanni Sassetta, 1392-1450.

help you find appropriate Christmas books. The storybook, *Told Under the Christmas Tree*,² a collection by the Association of Childhood Education International, and *Favorite Christmas Stories*,³ compiled by Frances Cavanah, will appeal to all—children and grownups alike—who are looking for religious or secular legends and stories. Encourage the children to share with the family and holiday guests what they have heard at school, or over the radio and TV.

What would Christmas be without music? The carols and hymns; the "special" music program by the church choirs; the Christmas songs recorded by popular artists.

A generation has grown up not knowing what it is like to gather round the harmonium or piano and sing the "good old songs." Christmas is the perfect time to revive the art of family singing. Here is one place for fellowship which goes beyond television. A visit to a sheet music store or music publisher will prove profitable.

Read in your copy of the church hymnal the texts of the hymns and carols, seeking the meaning behind the words. There are 23 numbers in the advent-

nativity section of *Christian Worship—A Hymnal*.

Other hymnals suggest numbers for use during advent, Christmas, and epiphany. Authentic stories and backgrounds of the various carols and hymns are available in books such as *Christmas Songs and Their Stories*, by Herbert H. Wernecke,⁴ and *The Gospel in Hymns*, by Albert Edward Bailey.⁵ Newspapers, radio, and television give time and space to Christmas music, stories, and programs.

The companion filmstrip to "Keeping Christmas Christian," is "How We Got Our Christmas Carols." It describes the stories behind four of our carols.

Churches and schools near you will be presenting special Christmas musical programs which your family will want to attend together. There probably will be so many of them that you will have a difficult time picking which one among many to attend at a particular time.

A visit to your local record shop will help you find just the record you want to satisfy your longing for "good" Christmas music. The Bing Crosby album, "White Christmas" has sold countless sets since its production a decade ago. "The Song of Christmas," a Fred Waring-Roy Ringwald production, is worthy

²The MacMillan Co., \$3.00.

³Grosset and Dunlap, \$1.98.

⁴Westminster Press, \$2.50.

⁵Charles Scribner's Sons.

of your consideration, as well as the Robert Shaw recordings of Christmas carols.

Insurance companies and merchants often have printed carol books for distribution at Christmas. If you really are musically inclined, you will want to get a copy of *The Oxford Book of Carols for Schools*, by Dearmer, Williams, and Shaw, published by Oxford Press, which contains over 200 carols! Also, the Hymn Society of America publishes articles about carols in its monthly magazine.

The church always has been a patron of art. Painting and sculpture stand out from among the others in quantity and long usage. They have been the means of expressing the symbolism behind the story of Christianity, from catacomb adornment and early iconography to contemporary paintings and Salva-

might have a traveling exhibit of some special collection. If you are fortunate to have a museum near you, you doubtless will find originals and reproductions of the masters of painting and sculpture there. In all cases, it is best to watch the newspaper for announcements, and for time schedules, unless it is open at all times to the public.

Several books contain the stories and small reproductions of paintings. Many times there is an enlarged detail of a specific painting with descriptions of the artist's technique. Albert Edward Bailey has compiled many books of art, among them *The Gospel in Art* and *Christ and His Gospel in Recent Art*. Cynthia Pearl Maus's *The World's Great Madonnas* has quantities of pictures of the mother and child. Another book by Maus, which has become a classic in

"Collecting Christmas cards and choice church bulletins will prove a source of pleasure." Here are two cards available from National Council of Churches. At the left is the "Blue Madonna," by Frank Wesley of India. On the right is a nativity scene by Ki-Chang-Kim of Korea. Both paintings are reproduced in color on Christmas cards.



Religious News Service Photo

dore Dali's "Christ of St. John of the Cross." Therefore, it is not unusual that here again, as church families looking for resources to use in our observance of Christmas, we have too much material to describe completely all that would enrich our celebration of Christmas.

If you are not a connoisseur of great art, *The Quiet Eye, A Way of Looking at Pictures*, by Sylvia Judson⁶ will be helpful to the family in developing an appreciation for great art and its value to society.

You will enjoy visiting together Christmas displays at the local art or historical museum, an art school or center, or the local elementary or high school. The school or center will show the work of its students and

the field of art interpretation, is *Christ and the Fine Arts*.

Reproductions of the great paintings and sculpture of the world are available from several sources. To begin with, there are the Picture Sets from church school curriculum. For instance, in these sets may be found the pictures: *Visit of the Wise Men*, by Hofmann; *The Holy Night*, by Fauerstein; *Shepherds on the Hillside*, by Woodward; and *The Birth of Jesus*, by Lu Hung Nien.

Reproductions are an inexpensive way to acquire pictures with earned reputations. With so many pictures of Christmas subjects available, why not join with the thousands of others who are discovering the pleasure of choosing and purchasing good art?

(Continued on page 28)

⁶Henry Regnery, Chicago.



Photo by the author

Mrs. Mary Strong, of Billings, Montana, works on one of the many useful containers she has created from Christmas cards. The box will be used later for candy, nuts, and other small gifts—and the Christmas cards will be enjoyed again along with the gift.

To Greet Again

by Fay Kuhlman

Now, you don't have to throw the Christmas cards away. Here are some helpful ways of using them "To Greet Again."

Each year trash cans throughout the nation overflow with discarded greeting cards. Regardless of the sentiment, time, and money that went into their selection, the bulk of them receive but a few glances at most, before landing in the waste basket to be forgotten. Though artist, poet, and publisher have put a great deal of thought and labor into their production, their worth seems to reach a de-

plorable end almost before it has had time to be appreciated. At the home of a resourceful Montana woman, this is not the case.

Mrs. Mary Strong, of Billings, Montana, is an individual who during her life has created a great deal of beauty by the work of her hands. Artistic by nature, she sees value in beautiful things more readily than the average individual. She does not read peremp-

torily the greeting cards sent to her and quickly toss them away. She enjoys them first by realizing that the printed sentiments were chosen to convey a particular message to her. Then, being the artist that she is, not one portion of the design is lost to her appreciation. It goes almost without saying that her cards are carefully retained for future reference and enjoyment. Their usefulness is far



Photo by the author

An interesting display of some of the useful articles that can be made from Christmas cards. Note the small container for light-weight gifts of candy and nuts; the can wrapped with silver paper used for scissors; the basket-type container for cards and letters; the Japanese lanterns for nuts, cookies, or candy; the deep tray for sewing supplies; the lapel piece; the box for small gifts such as crochet work; the container for metal combs; the pencil holders; the small gift box; and the bonbon dish.



from ended by their journey to a first recipient, for Mrs. Strong has endless ways of sharing and extending the loveliness she finds in her greeting cards.

First, her cards are carefully screened for a great variety of projects. Next, she chooses those making complete pictures in their own frames. These she saves to cover the lids of boxes designed for small gift enclosures. If boxes the right size are not readily available, Mrs. Strong uses what cardboard she has at hand to make boxes of the proper size. Inside the boxes she is apt to put delightful gifts of candy, cookies, or crochet work she has made. The containers are treasured long after the contents have been used, finding varied uses as trinket holders, handkerchief boxes, and so on.

Many of the clear-cut cherubs, Santas, reindeer, Christmas trees,

angels, children, gay ornaments and pine cones are cut out and used as unique and especially beautiful trim for gift packages. These she wraps in economical plain paper, and her packages display a refreshing individuality never obtainable with seals and trim from store counters. Each package she wraps and decorates conveys a happy message in color with the spirit of the season to become a personal tribute of regard from its designer. Though there may be only a gay border worth saving on a card, Mrs. Strong finds use for that; it is quite likely to frame a particular lovely verse she has found to carry exactly the idea or sentiment she wishes to send.

Under her agile fingers, a simple cardboard container for cottage cheese has been known to acquire a gay coat saying "Merry Christmas" on one side, and to carry

a cheery verse on the other. The top was covered by another pretty design, cut to fit, the lid hinged with a bit of gay yarn, and thus was formed a clever and useful holder for bonbons or other things. A slender tin can wrapped with a silver card becomes a lovely container for a youngster's gift of crayons, pencils, a dainty handkerchief, or small bouquet for a lady friend who will undoubtedly use the silver tube for crochet hooks or pencils in her home. The bottom portion of a milk carton adorned with prancing reindeer and jolly Santas, and with a sturdy handle fastened securely around and beneath the box, turns into a handled, basket-type container with color and design to delight any child. A cereal box may develop into a cheerful, useful holder reminiscent of Grandma's day when metal comb holders used to adorn the walls near the old wash stand. Mrs. Strong chooses cards appropriate for the time of giving, and makes the comb holders good and sturdy, with a bright yarn loop for hanging. These also make fine holders for letters that need answering or any other small things that need a special place in the home.

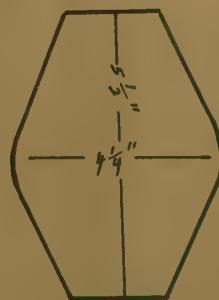
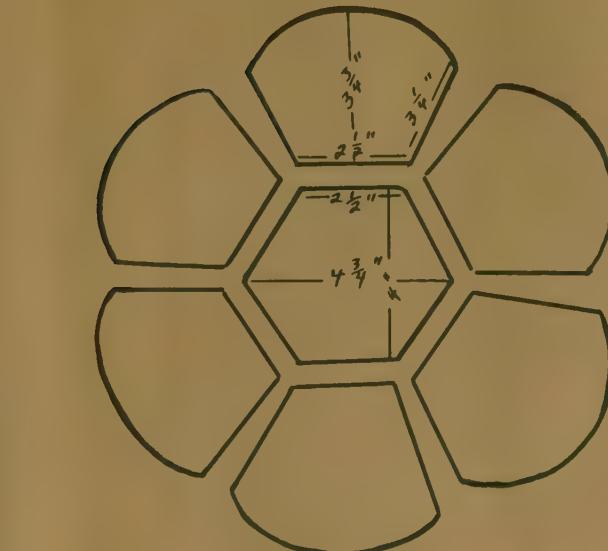
Lovely deep trays for holding cards, sewing supplies, crochet threads, or any other light possessions one may wish to keep tidily on a table are made by the use of simple patterns which anyone can cut and are put together with gay yarn stitching. By finishing with a blanket stitch around the top of the pieces, she makes a most attractive deep tray that holds gay messages of cheer on every panel and that will impart pleasure for a long, long, time. First Mrs. Strong cuts the panels of cardboard to give solidity and strength. Then it is a simple matter to cover the panels with scenes to convey the spirit of the occasion and to trim the edges to fit the cardboard panels. Other containers, reminiscent of Japanese lanterns, are made with the same pattern as the tray, but instead of the scalloped edges, the pieces are cut off

straight so as to fit together to form the desired shape. These are beautiful for small gifts like nuts, candies, small fruits, tiny cookies, and many other light-weight items that fit well into a holder of this type. Again, nearly the same pattern is used for the four-sided basket-type container, set together with a square piece of cardboard for the bottom. Mrs. Strong's own work scissors are held in a sturdy tin can, gaily adorned with favorite cutouts from cards she has received.

As a particularly nice small remembrance, Mrs. Strong makes and gives tiny lapel pieces. These, too, she makes of greeting cards, after the pictures and special cutouts have been used. From the remaining bits of cards, with color but no particular usable design, she makes slender triangles, about eight inches long, two inches wide at one end, and tapered to nothing at the other side. Starting at the broad (two-inch) end, she rolls the triangles over a knitting needle or wire toward the small point and pastes that point securely. Thus she forms a symmetrical "bead" with interesting color and design. Mrs. Strong then puts six or more beads in a cluster with bright yarn or ribbon and ties them together at one end. To keep them from sliding off the yarn she puts either a gay yarn pom-pom or a glass bead on the lower end. At the top she attaches a perky bow of yarn or bright ribbon, and puts a safety pin at the back for attaching to the lapel. For a durable and more sparkling finish she finds it advisable to shellac the beads, thus making them weather- and fade-proof, a bright bit of color to add attractive interest to almost any winter coat or dress.

Friends of Mrs. Strong thus enjoy her cards long after she receives them in the many gift items and containers she makes. Her cards not only give their happy message once; they greet over and over again, making for more pleasure than many an item a dozen times as costly.

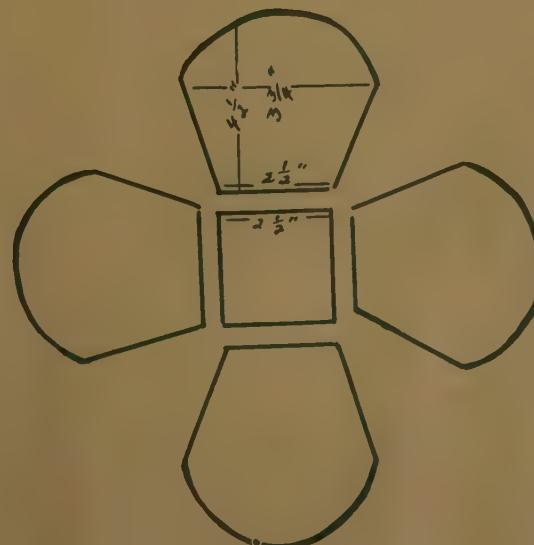
Designs and measurements for making the patterns are given below. Sizes and shapes of containers may be varied greatly by a little experimenting with height and width of panels, to make a fascinating variety of colorful and useful items with no expense except a little flour-and-water paste, bits of colored string, yarn or ribbon, scissors, and time. And, it's great fun!



Tray construction as shown in the upper left of photo on page 14.

4-sided container shown in lower right of photo on page 14.

4-sided container shown in Mrs. Strong's hands on page 13.



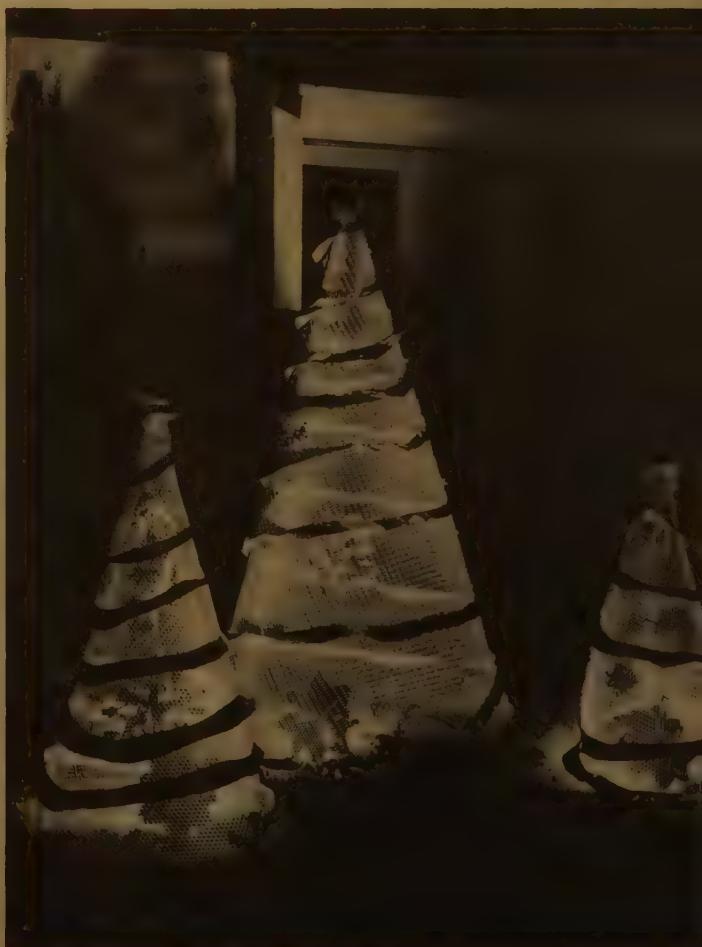


Top Left: Just two giant pine cones centering sprays of pungent pine, and topped by a red ribbon bow; but the informality and texture harmonize well with the rough plank door where dainty decorations would be out of keeping.



Lower Left: To make a tulle tree like this, cut Christmas-red tulle into six-inch squares, then fold and fold until the result is a triangle. Poke the points of triangles into openings of wire tree made of small mesh chicken-wire until the tree is full. Add little balls and bells to suit your fancy and use as centerpiece for the Christmas table.

Below: Modernistic Christmas trees are made of white wire-net, sprayed silver, then trimmed with lengths of red paper, ribbon, or oilcloth—the latter is weather-proof. Bulbs inside the trees are covered with red poinsettias; grouping is floodlighted for more dramatic effect by entrance.





Photos by the author

for christmas decoration

by Louise Price Bell

Above: A very simple mobile is made from dowels, glitter-sticks arranged to simulate stars, with a few Christmas balls in just the right spots. Note that sticks are arranged to represent the Cross in four places.

Right: Here's an attractive decoration to be used on the center of the dining-room table, with gifts for the guests to pull out at dessert time on Christmas Day. It is also a clever idea to have on a table in the living room when filled with inexpensive items to give children.

To make the chimney, simply cover a tall, thin carton with the type of crepe paper that looks like bricks. Once that is pasted on the box, apply white cotton at the base to simulate snow, and apply a little around the top of the chimney, arranging it as snow naturally clings to chimneys. Then fill the chimney with the gaily wrapped packages, and your job is done. You'll enjoy it all through the holidays and so will your friends who come to your home.



Worship in the Family with Children

To Use with Younger Children

I LIKE CHRISTMAS

The family was getting ready for Christmas. Emily could not remember her first Christmas, so she was excited about the tree with its colored lights and beautiful ornaments. She was excited about the Christmas secrets, and making plans to surprise others.

"Why?" Emily asked about everything.

"Christmas is Jesus' birthday," Mother said.

Today the family was wrapping Christmas gifts. Emily was ex-

cited about that, too. She flitted about the living room from the lighted tree to Mother, to big sister, to big brother.

"Pretty paper," she said, putting a small finger tip on the gay colors of the paper. "Pretty package," she said, admiring the gifts piled on the table.

"Why do you wrap presents?" Emily asked.

"For Christmas," Mother answered. "Christmas is Jesus' birthday."

When all the gifts were wrapped the family went to deliver them.

"Come get on your sled," said big brother. It was fun for Emily to grab handfuls of snow as she was pushed along. It was fun to drag her feet in the drifts along the walk. Then Emily looked at the pile of gifts in the arms of all the members of her family: Mother, Daddy, big brother, big sister.

"Let me carry, too," she said, holding up her snow-covered gloves.

"Not with that snow!" said big sister with a laugh.

"Take off your gloves and shake the snow off," big brother said, smiling. Then he showed her how to do it.

"Now," he said, "you can carry one of mine," and he put a package into her arms.

Emily smiled happily. "Why Christmas?" she asked, a twinkle in her eyes. Without waiting for an answer she said, "Christmas is Jesus' birthday. I like Christmas!"

Luoma



**Theme for December:
My World
at Christmas**

A Word to Parents

The materials on this page and on the next two pages are for your use in moments of worship with your children. If you have a family worship service daily in your home, some of the materials here may be used at that time. If you use *The Secret Place*, you may find that some of the materials fit into the meditations in that booklet.

To Use with Older Children

CHRISTMAS IS GIVING

Eddie came home from church with a frown on his face.

"What's the matter with you?" his older brother, Dan, asked.

"We were talking about Christmas," Eddie explained, "and all the boys were saying what they wanted to get this year. Our teacher scolded us and said that Christmas was for giving, and not for getting!"

"But it's true!" Dan answered.

"There you go, too!" Eddie said angrily.

After dinner, the family sat about the table talking. "Guess it's about time to make a list of Christmas gifts," Father said.

"Good," Eddie said, looking happier than he had before dinner. "I'll tell you what I want this year."

Father looked surprised. "But, have you forgotten that we list what we are going to give to others? We are not thinking of ourselves."

The frown returned to Eddie's face, but he said nothing.

"I've thought of something for old Mrs. Kelley," Mother said. "She has so little money, and she needs a new warm sweater. I'm going to knit her a pretty red one."

"I've thought of something for Mr. King," Dan said eagerly. "He loves to talk about the time when he was a boy and played the harmonica. There's a beauty in the music store. I'm going to shovel some extra sidewalks and get it for him. He can play that even if he does spend all his time in a wheel chair." Both Mother and Father nodded in agreement, a smile on their faces.

"And I've thought of a post card album for our little neighbor, Alice," Father said. "With her rheumatic heart, she can't do too much. I'll send her a card each time I'm out of town. That will give her something to do for a long time!"

Father turned to Eddie. "Any ideas, Eddie? We want a gift for Mr. Svenberg, the old gardener, and for little blind Billy."

"No," Eddie said, sulking.

"If you were eight, and blind, what would you want?" Father persisted. "Or, if you were 80 and not able to do much, what would you want?" Eddie didn't answer, but somehow Father's words stayed in his mind. If he were blind, what would he want? A car? A ball? A book? No, none of these would do.

Suddenly the frown was gone, and a smile took its place. "I know," Eddie said eagerly. "If I were blind, I'd want something I could feel! Aunt Mary said she wanted good homes for the puppies. Let's get one for Billy!"

"Of course!" said Mother, "That's the very thing! Can you think of a gift as nice for Mr. Svenberg?"

Eddie sat still, thinking what it would be like to be old, and sick, and tired. What would Mr. Svenberg think about? The cold weather and the need to keep warm? His garden, buried under the winter snow? The bright red geraniums on his window sills? No. Suddenly Eddie remembered the look on Mr. Svenberg's face when he talked about his children.

They were not children now. They were all grown up and lived far away. Of course! Eddie knew the answer!

"If I were 80, I think I'd want, more than anything else, someone to talk to me, and to eat with me. Instead of giving Mr. Svenberg *something*, let's ask him to dinner on Christmas Day. Then we can all write on cards the time we will come to talk to him. I'm sure he will like that."

"I'm sure he will, too," Father said softly.

Before Eddie knew it, it was time to deliver the Christmas gifts. There was the red sweater for Mrs. Kelley, the harmonica for Mr. King, the post card album for Alice, a frisky puppy for Billy; but for Mr. Svenberg there were five cards: the invitation to dinner, and four cards with their promises of companionship.

The family went to deliver the gifts. Suddenly Eddie smiled. "You know," he said to Dan, "I know now what my church school teacher meant. Christmas is for giving, and not for getting."

"Sure," Dan said. "Christmas is giving to show love."

—Luoma



For Family Worship

Beauty Center: If your family uses a beauty center to help to create a mood of worship in your home, it can do much to reflect the Christmas spirit. Christmas greens, the open Bible, and a picture will do this. *The Madonna of the Chair*, by Raphael, will be especially meaningful if you plan to use it in the meditation.

Call to Worship: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

—Luke 2:11.

Song: Use a favorite Christmas carol or choose from the following: "The Sleep of the Baby Jesus," primary pupil's book, year one, fall quarter, page 39; "The Snow Lay on the Ground," primary pupil's book, year two, fall, page 31; "Away in a Manger," primary pupil's book, year two, fall, page 34; "What Can I Give Him?" primary pupil's book, year three, fall, page 41; "We Three Kings of Orient Are," junior pu-

pil's book, year three, fall, page 46.

Poem: Use one of the poems printed on this page or choose from the following: "A Christmas Carol," primary pupil's book, year one, fall, page 35; "A Christmas Carol," primary pupil's book, year one, fall, page 36; "Christmas," primary pupil's book, year two, fall, page 42; "Christmas Joy," primary pupil's book, year two, fall, page 43; "The King's Birthday," junior pupil's book, year one, fall, pages 42 and 43; "Christmas Eve," junior pupil's book, year one, fall, page 45; "Long, Long Ago," junior pupil's book, year two, fall, page 39.

Story: "The First Christmas," primary pupil's book, year one, fall, beginning on page 33; "The Story as It Is Given in the Bible," primary pupil's book, year one, fall, page 37; "The Angel's Song," primary pupil's book, year two, fall, beginning on page 33; "The Picture the Shepherds Saw,"

primary pupil's book, year two, fall, beginning on page 35; "Gifts for the Child Jesus," primary pupil's book, year two, beginning on page 37; "What the Shepherds Saw and Heard," primary pupil's book, year three, fall, beginning on page 34; "Visitors from a Far Country," primary pupil's book, year three, fall, beginning on page 38; "A Right to Christmas?" junior's pupil's book, year three, fall, beginning on page 40.

Meditation: Use the picture study, page 41, primary pupil's book, year two, fall quarter.

Song: Choose another song from those suggested above.

Prayer: Plan your own prayer, to express your thoughts, feelings, or the emotions that are dominant at this season of the year; adapt the prayer printed on this page so that it may refer to some gift or pet in your home; or use "A Christmas Prayer," junior pupil's book, year two, fall, page 46.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Thank You, Father, for the time
When the bells of Christmas chime,
Telling all the world again
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

We would not on Christmas Eve
Think of gifts we will receive,
But be thankful, every one,
For the gift of Your dear Son.

Father, show us how to make
Others happy for Your sake,
And may all we gladly do
Be a Christmas gift to You.

—Belle Chapman Morrill

PRAYER

Dear God, we thank You for our parakeet. His whistle has a happy sound. Help us to keep him happy by giving him food and water, and by keeping his cage clean. Help us to be careful not to frighten him. Amen.

—Frances Bourne Taft

¹From *Story World*. Copyright, 1955, by The American Baptist Publication Society. Used by permission.

BIRTHDAY OF JESUS

Little Jesus had a birthday
Just as other children do.
Now we celebrate our birthdays
And we celebrate His, too.

Christmas Day is Jesus' birthday
And all through the year we bring
Gifts of love and reverence to Him,
Who came to be our Lord and King.

—Helen Howland Prommel¹

FAMILY FUN

When suppertime is over
And the dishes put away,
We all sit down together
For a time of family play.

Daddy plays a record
Or sings a favorite song.
Baby sister claps her hands
And tries to hum along.

We each take turns suggesting
A story to be read.
Then Mother listens to our prayers
And tucks us into bed.

—Claire Saalbach

A CHRISTMAS CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, take your hands and stand
with us

Beneath the starlit sky,
While winds play on their magic
harps

A sacred lull-a-by.
Come, lend your ears and hear
with us

The song the angels sing,
Of peace on earth, good will to
men,

And of a cradled King.
Come lift your eyes and look with
us

Upon yon radiant star
That led the wise men from the
East

To Bethlehem afar.
Come, bend your knee, and kneel
with us

Before the Holy One,
To worship with adoring love
God's own forgotten Son.

—Mazelle Wildes Thomas²

²From *Juniors*. Copyright, 1953, by The American Baptist Publication Society. Used by permission.

They worked through the night.
When the early morning sun sent
its first rays through the door of
the shed, a handmade cradle,
holding a doll dressed in rosy
pink, stood in its soft beams.

a Doll for Christina



by Charlotte Swaney

Maria slipped quietly into bed beside her little sister, Christina, thinking she was asleep.

"Maria," whispered Christina in the darkness, "can we stay awake till St. Nicholas comes?"

"Oh, no!" Maria gasped with surprise. "The good St. Nicholas may not come this year."

"Not come?" asked Christina.

"St. Nicholas needs help," stammered Maria. "Papa has not been able to help him. The crops have not been good."

"Not one little dolly for my stocking?" persisted Christina. "See the little white streak over there? That's my stocking."

Maria looked. The little white streak made her heart ache. "Christina," she scolded gently, "you should not have hung up your stocking. I fear it will still be empty in the morning. Go to sleep now, Baby."

"But the good St. Nicholas, you

told me—just one—little—dolly—" Christina's voice trailed off.

Maria lay still, wishing she had not told Christina about St. Nicholas. Ever since her father had come to California from Mexico and bought this vegetable garden, everything had gone wrong: the dry weather, the poor crops. But what would a baby know about crops, or that it took every penny they made for the payments on the place. The Mission where Maria had learned about Jesus, and how to speak English, was her only comfort. She generously taught her family all she had learned. And now this!

Maria turned restlessly. If only baby sister would forget about it; but she knew in her heart that Christina would not. All day she played by herself while the others worked and Maria was in school. She was such a good baby, and now she wanted a dolly. A sob

caught in Maria's throat. The crazy sticks and weeds she was forever wrapping up in old rags, and calling her dolly!

"Sticks," Maria stiffened. "That is it—a stick doll. There's some pink stuff in the old chest. I can make a dress. Nothing would show but the head. Maybe I could make a bonnet." As she planned, Maria rolled out of bed quietly, fumbling in the dark for her clothes. She knew she had to try anyway. She could not face Christina in the morning if there was no doll in her stocking. There must be something in the crating shed she could use. A few minutes later she had found a candle in the shed, lit it, and placed it on a box.

She was staring vacantly about when her older brother stepped in.

"Maria!" he sounded surprised. Maria was startled. "Pedro,

(Continued on page 30)

ARE WE GETTING AHEAD?

Are "hidden persuaders" forcing you unconsciously to accept luxuries as necessities in your home? If so, does Dad have to carry the extra cost though "moonlighting" an extra job?

"They'll know you've arrived when you drive up in a . . .!"

"Drive a . . . , a mark of success!"

"This is a house that makes the good life better!"

These advertising slogans tantalize modern families striving so desperately to "get ahead" economically and socially. Apparently, the size, number and power of *things* impress present-day Americans. For as Josh Billings characterizes us, "We not only want to go fast but faster, not only get rich but richer."

Is my family "getting ahead"? What progress have we made toward Christlike goals in daily living at home and outside of our family? Just what is Christian success or progress for my family?

A. Devaney, Inc., N. Y.



From other lands and cultures come visitors to our country and they are amazed, even dumbfounded, by our high standard of living, rarely seeing that there are thousands that merely exist on subsistence levels. To many of us luxuries have become necessities. Two or three cars, two television sets, ultra-expensive high-fidelity sets in one family are symbols of a good provider.

Often this means "moonlighting" an extra job for Father, a rather common phenomenon today. Recently a well-known marriage counselor accused wives of pushing their husbands in order to get ahead at any cost!

Although necessary expenses cause many mothers to enter the business world actively, others are seeking employment to meet the payments on heavy mortgage and installment buying.

Another aspect of this "getting ahead" complex is the ambitious desire for social standing, knowing "the right people," attaining a special status of importance or popularity by virtue of birth, money, or social prestige. . . . In the eager mad climb ethical and moral principles are carelessly forgotten, even frowned upon.

Near the close of another year is an ideal period for families to "take stock," to make an inventory of their own situation and condition. This will come about through frank facing of family goals, some heart-searching and a defining of "what is success in our book?"

What are the Christian standards of success and progress? Is it possible to measure and to compute them?

Last New Year's Day we received from family friends a clever "Inventory Sheet" that was brief, simple, and amusingly informative. Though somewhat facetious it was warmly revealing of this devoted Christian family. It showed us graphically how the year had brought them new friends and greater appreciation of old friends; less money but more satisfaction in accomplishments in their home because of a larger garden and several new varieties of trees and shrubs; an increase in time spent in recreation together; wider service in community and church

Study Guide and Article for Parents' Groups

by Ruth Lentz

projects. This unusual "message" at year's end not only revealed a great deal about our friends but interested us in an appraisal of our family.

As Christians we turn to the teachings of Jesus for clues that will lead us toward a definition of successful living that is compatible with our faith. In contrast to our passion for material gain we need to read with new discernment the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Close by we find the difficult passage concerning anxiety about raiment and food as well as the picture of "everlasting treasure" (Matt. 5 and 6).

When an ambitious mother sought prestige and power for her sons, Jesus stated clearly the cost or the sum of greatness (Matt. 20:20-28). The rich young ruler was a picture: wealthy, attractive, moral; but the Master pointed out the one lack, his investment in possession rather than the dedication of his whole being (Mark 10:17-22).

All areas of family life lend themselves to study and exploration in the light of these immortal teachings. Rather than asking ourselves, "Are we getting ahead?" let us question frankly our progress toward Christlike goals in our day-by-day-living, in the intimate relationship in the home, and in the broader encounters outside of the family circle.

Does the earning, dividing, and spending of money occupy a major amount of time, attention, and even tension? Although we must admit that we live in a "money culture" here is a challenge to the Christian family to sincerely appraise its stewardship of possessions. How may a family consider the purchase of a luxury item in the face of the numerous crying needs among their less privileged "neighbors"? Are "hidden persuaders" forcing us unconsciously to accept luxuries as necessities? We remember that the Apostle Paul did not teach that "money was evil" but that the "*love* of it was the root of all evil." Thus it seems that our New Testament teaches that to put a high value upon money and what it can buy smothers out the warm desire to share and leads only to destructive ends.

Are we growing within our family to appreciate, understand and to be more tolerant in all of our interpersonal relationships? In these restless, tense, confused days the responsible Christian family is seeking to build self-respect, trust, and confidence in one another. Such conscious striving brings an invaluable sense of belonging, of worth to one another, and to all humankind. Family differences are inevitable, but progress comes as they are resolved without rancor, bitterness, and divisive selfishness. This positive attitude carries over quite naturally into relationships outside the home as family members demonstrate their ability to get along with schoolmates, business associates, and throughout all social intercourse.

Many families find avenues toward maturity, progress in successful, satisfying living, by acquiring new interests through projects of service. Recently, one family visited an exhibit at a local art institute and were fascinated by the sculptures by a young Japanese student. Meeting him at the informal get-acquainted tea, they invited him to their home. A warm friendship developed that broke down the artist's reserve and shyness, dissipating his bitter loneliness. He opened up to this family a new world of creative beauty almost totally unknown to them previously. On Thanksgiving Day when each one was expressing gratitude for special blessings of the year, their new friend's contribution to their happiness headed the list.

Another family "adopted" a shut-in member of their church and discovered rich rewards as they prepared and planned thoughtfully for her well-being. Others in the church and community were led to assume a similar program of service to the lonely and neglected, encouraged by the efforts of the originators of the plan.

As we read newspapers and other periodicals these days we are impressed by numerous tragedies, individuals who feel they are failing as husbands, wives, parents; who are getting nowhere in their business or profession. Suicide, retreat into self-

pity, escape from reality, or attempts to disappear, to become "lost" among strangers are all too common a practice. Perhaps one cause for these unhappy situations is that modern pressures demand material rewards as the criterion for successful living. Here is another area of life in which the family may prevent tragedy long before it is born. Good mental health is usually rooted in the ability to accept and to understand criticism, to realize that everyone faces failure at some time or other, that no one person is a paragon. Within the closely knit relationships of the home, one may develop a sense of humor, build within himself resources for resiliency and the capacity to "bounce" back.

Thus at the end of the year, as we balance our

books, we are including here a check-list or evaluation chart to stimulate thinking in several aspects of "getting ahead" in growth and maturity. This is just a beginning, a suggested listing of questions; for we feel that it will be a source of fun as well as profit for each family to compose its own set of goals and measurements with the timeless teachings of our faith as the standard.

An Evaluation Chart on Our Attitudes Toward "Getting Ahead"

Do we spend time together in our home doing things as a family? (Regularly, occasionally, rarely?)

Do we share ideas about religion, friendship, aims in life, world affairs, moral standards?

for "Are We Getting Ahead?"

Study Guide



Preparation for Meeting

Assign the reading of the article to two persons who will act as chairmen of two groups at the meeting. Make assignments to others of the group asking them to discover information concerning luxury spending, such as magazine and newspaper advertising, articles, pictures, stories.

Prepare copies of the "Evaluation Chart" appearing at the close of the article.

Assign scripture passages to be read during the worship period.

Period of Worship

Hymn: "Creation's Lord, We Give Thee Thanks" 492.*

Scripture Theme: "Our Bible Points the Way":

The Beatitudes—Matthew 5:1-12
Eternal Treasure—Matthew 6:19-21
Serving Two Masters—Matthew 6:24
Anxiety—Matthew 6:25, 26, 33

Prayer for guidance in choosing worthy goals for life

Hymn: "Take My Life, and Let It Be," No. 296.*

Introduction to Study

The leader and the chairman of the two groups discuss the article in conversational style. The leader may ask each group leader pointed questions or each may contribute highlights of the article.

Suggested Outline for Conversation:

Americans are obsessed with the desire for possessions that are bigger, finer, faster, "more modern than tomorrow."

How does this affect the present-day family?

How can Christian families face this trend?

By studying Christian standards

By attitudes toward earning, spending, using money

By growth in inter-personal relationships

By developing interests in service activities outside the home

By building healthy mental attitudes

Divide the group into two sections by any suitable method. Each group will

meet separately for about twenty minutes to a half hour under the assigned leaders.

Group I—Modern American Criteria for Success

Discuss and formulate a list showing present-day criteria of "success" as evidenced by modern advertising and propaganda, newspaper and magazine articles, pictures and stories. Have copies of popular magazines available for reference.

Group II—Christian Concepts for Success

Discuss and list definitions and attributes of "success" from a Christian viewpoint, using Scripture references if possible, or quotations from religious writers.

Period of General Discussion

When the two groups come together, each lists on blackboard its findings with brief explanation.

Group I—Modern American Criteria for Success

Group II—Christian Concepts for Success

Informal Discussion (using suggested questions):

1. Are there any similarities in the two lists? (If so, draw lines joining them together)

2. Where are the disparities? Are they reconcilable?

3. Is it un-Christian to strive for success financially? What is luxury and when does a luxury become a necessity?

4. Why are many fathers "moonlighting" (working at two jobs)? What are the reasons for so many mothers working gainfully outside the home?

5. How may the family meet financial reverses and crises without bitterness and disintegration?

Share the "Evaluation Chart" with members of the group.

Discuss additions or eliminations in order that it may meet adequately the

(Continued on page 30)

*In *Christian Worship—A Hymnal*.

Are we appreciative of the work and sacrifice of all members of our family? List responsibilities carried by each that provide for the well-being of all.

Do we make an effort to enlarge our circle of friendship among families of our community? In our church? Among other groups?

What is the attitude of our family toward material success?

- a) Keeping up with the Joneses
- b) Acquiring a good education
- c) Achieving social acceptance
- d) Striving for Christian character
- e) Enrichment through books, music, art
- f) Cultivating interest in world affairs, political, economic and religious

Are we learning how to get along with all of our associates? Do we make an effort to see and to understand divergent points of view?

Do we as a family consider together the means of earning, spending, dividing, saving and sharing income?

Do we seek prayerfully and sincerely to discover God's will for all we do through family worship at home and at church?

Do we seek avenues of service in the church and the community that will broaden our influence and our Christian witness?

Do we endeavor to build understanding in how to accept criticism and failure?

BIBLEGRAM

by Hilda E. Allen

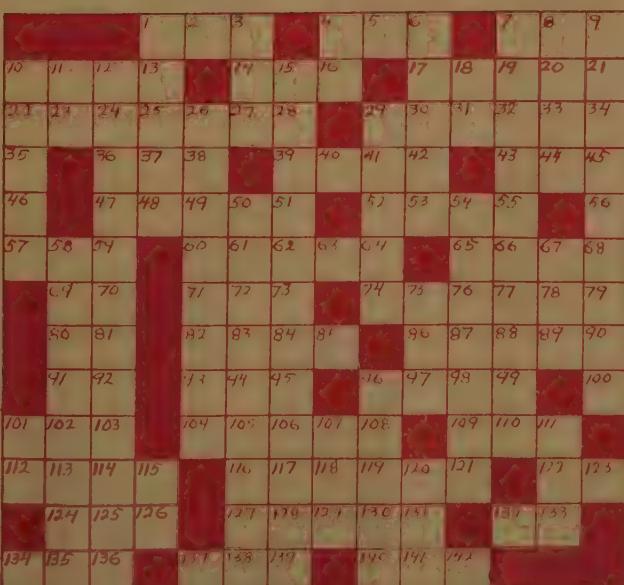
Guess the words defined below and write them over their numbered dashes. Then transfer each letter to the correspondingly numbered square in the pattern. The colored squares indicate word endings.

Reading from left to right, you will find that the filled pattern will contain a selected quotation from the Bible.

A Night bird that screeches or cries -----	44	30	49	20	8	60	98
B Yellow singing bird for the house -----	58	141	56	33	85	82	
C Bird shown on a twenty-five cent coin -----	67	105	129	24	126		
D Small bird that usually nests in a hole in a tree --	12	40	43	46	5	50	91
E A male bird of brilliant scarlet color -----	63	10	70	75	112	35	61
F Large bird (now extinct) that does not fly -----	103	114	111	132			
G Large, long-tailed, brilliantly colored game bird -----	118	21	45	18	32	88	25
H Wearing apparel for birds-----	22	64	47	6	66	73	55
I The red breast -----	108	37	39	128	123		
J Bird that symbolizes peace -----	16	113	106	121			
K Eagle-like bird that sometimes destroys poultry -----	72	109	96	34			
L Bird with extremely long legs and neck and bright red plumage -----	29	1	14	68	62	4	134
M Small, plainly colored song bird -----	79	86	116	84	28	130	
N Bird called the "Baltimore," -----	92	89	19	53	99	87	
O Soft and downy -----	17	11	95	81	133	9	

P Having a flavor like nuts -----	15	54	74	90	13			
Q A coot, or large rail -----	140	38	139	125	78	142		
R Small songbird, bright blue with reddish breast -----	48	7	23	2	76	97	31	42
S Hawk-like bird with long narrow wings and forked tail -----	59	101	124	117				
T Fish-eating, diving bird --	77	107	94	138				
U Close cluster of feathers on top of some birds' heads --	131	119	100	120				
V Silly or sentimental person -----	127	80	104	71	52			
W To tease -----	137	110	41	135	36			
X Eat dinner -----	115	122	102	57				
Y Covered with dots -----	136	83	51	65	93			

(Solution on page 28)



Hobbies Make Gift Buying Easy

Selecting the right gift for a friend or relative is often a problem, unless that person has a hobby. When a gift-giving occasion comes along, such as a birthday, Christmas, or an anniversary, and no hint of a preference has been given by the recipient, then it is helpful to be able to narrow down the selecting of a gift to some specific hobby.

Take, for example, traveling as a hobby. If Uncle John and Aunt Minnie have raised their family, all of whom have left home, leaving the parents free to travel, then any of the following gifts would, no doubt, be welcome.

For their luggage, plastic bottles in a travel case are always useful for holding needed liquids. A small iron for pressing wrinkled garments is a convenience. Small books with leaves that keep postage

stamps from sticking together are useful. Also useful are lucite name tags for luggage, a pair of folding scissors, capsules containing a good detergent for doing light laundry, shoe bags, wash cloth puffs (those small, space-saving discs which expand into full-size washrags when put into water); all will be gifts that fit snugly into the usual travel equipment. A sturdy case for that *extra pair of glasses*, without which no one should travel, and one for the colored glasses make a nice matched pair of gifts.

If Uncle John and Aunt Minnie are motoring, then accessories for the car can be added to the gift list: a small soft pillow to tuck behind one's back; a sufficient length of sturdy towrope; a "hide-a-key" container so an extra car key can be attached to some hidden part of the car in case the regular key gets

photo by erb



Dad, who has had some experience in photography, will probably get excited over gift items from this display. Just think, extra lens, a tripod, color filters, or the carrying case with which to overstuff his Christmas stocking.

by Loie Brandom

locked inside; and a flashlight with new batteries. An auto laprobe would be splendid for trips in winter. It would also be useful when Uncle John wants to stretch out in some park, or along a grassy highway for a short nap. A thermos bottle makes a useful gift; so does a map holder, a car expense record with pencil attached, a de-icer, a car coat carrier, and, of course, a well-equipped chest of necessary car tools, or a good jack.

This is only one example of a hobby which might make certain gifts welcome. There are so many other hobbies that people enjoy. The following list may act as a guide to your own ideas for gifts.

Take the hobby of cooking. Anyone who likes to prepare food that is different in taste or appearance will welcome gifts of oriental spices and condiments, odd-shaped baking dishes, brass dessert molds, modern bake-serve dishes, garlic jar, fry bag, electric egg cooker, rack for holding the cookbook, chocolate

chipper, graters of all sizes, automatic timer, and other gadgets and laborsavers.

For Aunt Abby, whose hobby is piecing quilts, there are gifts of cotton batting for quilt filling, lining material, thread, bindings, quilt blocks, and patterns of new quilt designs.

The book hobby provides a wide scope for gift selection. Any new book in the fields of travel, science, poetry, religion, biography, and history is welcome. A subscription to a favorite magazine or a book club is sure to please. A book for keeping records of the birthdays of relatives and friends is always appropriate, as is also an address book with places for telephone numbers.

Such hobbies as the collecting of china, glassware, dolls, Indian reliques, prints and pictures, autographs, clock, baskets, trivets, stamps and meters, coins, and miniatures speak for themselves when it comes to what would be most acceptable in the gift line.

(Continued on page 28)

photo by erb

The beginning photographer will need a minimum of equipment, some of which is shown in this picture. A guide book on "how to take pictures" will be invaluable to the beginner.



Christmas in France

(Continued from page 6)

In the smiling inland provinces of Berry, Maine, Anjou and Touraine, aptly called the "Garden of France," pork is the thing at yuletide. All the year round, every country household has been fattening its porker—and only the squeal will be allowed to waste.

The repast is laid on three white tablecloths, by the light of three candles—for the Holy Trinity. A row of candles is lit on the window sill in the dining room, to show his way to any weary, wayworn traveler. He is perfectly welcome to drop in on the family and share in the festivities.

On Boxing Day, youngsters here will be presented with a whole range of homemade pastries and sweetmeats: *naulets*, in the shape of a cradle with a pink candy baby Jesus; *cornabeaux*, in the form of oxen and staghorns; *haguenettes*, featuring a whole zoo; and *bourdots* or pear paste, with many holes cut out with a thimble.

But if you wish to see altogether different Christmas rites which have sprung from the innermost depths and firm faith of the French soul, you must come over to Provence. Here, the high-perched village of Les Baux has maintained ever since the beginning of the 13th century the ancient mystery plays of the birth of the Redeemer and the offering of a live lambkin to baby Jesus. These plays are unique in the world.

What endows these mystery plays with a deep medieval fervor is the fact that the local citizenry feel a sense of personal relationship with Christmas. The arms of the community feature the sixteen-rayed Nativity Star, which guided the three wise men from the East up high mountains and across weary deserts to that humble stable at Bethlehem. The motto is "A l'Hazard, Bal-thazar," for its ancient princes claimed direct descent from Balshazar himself.

Such time-honored mystery plays are all the more moving because they are not played by professionals, but by the local untutored shepherd, weaver, grocer and candlestickmaker, who do not perform but just live their roles.

Naive and old-fashioned as our ancient mystery plays, Christmas customs, and carols may seem to the sophisticated, to the humblest and dullest life they bring a touch of glory and a heart-warming sense of brotherhood in Jesus.

Christmas at Your Finger Tips

(Continued from page 12)

Prices range from the five-cent post card size and twenty-five or fifty cents for 8 x 10 inch size to the larger sizes that sell for \$15 and up. If you do not live near an art store or museum, write for catalogs. The Detroit Institute of Art⁷ has such a catalog, which is free.

⁷Detroit, Michigan.

Associated American Artists⁸ charge 25 cents for their catalog, entitled *Catalog of Contemporary American Painters*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art⁹ sells an illustrated list, *Color Reproductions of Paintings*, for 35 cents. The UNESCO catalogs: *Catalogs of Color Reproductions of Paintings*, Vols. I & II, sell for \$3.50 each and are beautifully illustrated. The New York Graphic Society produces *Fine Art Reproductions: Old and Modern Masters*¹⁰ which sells for \$12.50. It is beautifully illustrated with color pages that make choosing a picture a simple matter. Popular magazines such as *Life* occasionally have sections of color reproductions, sometimes several pages long. Good art frequently is reproduced on Christmas cards, too.

Collecting Christmas cards and choice church bulletins will prove a source of pleasure and offer opportunity for creative work. The family may make a scrapbook for one of the community shut-ins, presenting this collection in the spirit of gifts and giving. Adding carols and Scripture verses that all understand will be an artistic experience. Also, the children of the family may describe what the picture says to them.

A fitting climax to a family's appreciation and enjoyment of Christmas art would be to enjoy a beautiful reproduction of an original work of art at Christmas, and then present it to the church for many to enjoy through the years. This, of course, would have to be cleared in advance with the proper authorities.

This wealth of material is at your finger tips. All one needs to do is to appropriate it to enrich the family's observance of Christmas.

Hobbies Make Gift Buying Easy

(Continued from page 27)

The sports hobbies have their requirements for special equipment. For hunters there might be a need for a gun-cleaning outfit or a gun rack for the playroom, a cartridge belt, hunting knife, decoys, or some special garments such as hand warmers, or equipment for making a duckblind more comfortable.

There are appropriate gifts for enthusiasts of skating, tennis, fishing, golfing, skiing, sledding, yachting, and canoeing.

The manual hobbies also present opportunities for the giving of gifts that fit into such crafts as metal working, woodcarving, leathercraft, bead work, soap carving, weaving, magic and sleight-of-hand, and pottery.

There are gifts galore for the followers of photography. A few suggestions besides the camera itself could be, books for mounting the prints, extra film (color or regular), flashlight

⁸712 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

⁹New York 28, N. Y.

¹⁰New York Graphic Society, 95 East Putnam Ave., Greenwich, Conn.

bulbs, portrait attachments, extra lenses for different purposes, a tripod, color filters, and an enlarger. If the hobbyist does his own developing and finishing, then the list of would-be gifts is almost unlimited.

Still another branch of hobbying is the one which includes knitting, crocheting, sewing, needlepoint, embroidery, rug hooking, fabric weaving, and allied arts, all of which offer the gift giver wonderful latitude in the selection of useful gifts.

One hobbyist who collected picture postcards displaying the Capitol building of the different states, with the postmark showing that each card had been mailed from the city containing that statehouse, gave her friends opportunity to make her happy many times with their thoughtfulness. Her collection also contained cards of many other famous places, all postmarked correctly, showing when and from where they were sent.

Nature lore as a hobby offers many opportunities for the giving of gifts such as field glasses, compass, notebook with attached pencil, lunch kit with a thermos bottle, birdbook, tree book, and camera with film.

New gifts are being invented all the time. Have you heard about the "doggy-doorbell," for the one whose hobby is pets? It is a gadget placed on the outside of a door where the dog usually scratches when it wants in. When the dog starts to scratch, he hits the gadget which rings a bell. There is also a stay-put feeding dish for pets which does not slide about when the dog or cat is trying to lick it.

When choosing your next gift, think first of your relative or friend's favorite hobby, and many appropriate objects are sure to suggest themselves to you. It is easy to buy gifts for people who have hobbies.

Biblegram Solution

(Biblegram on page 25)

SOLUTION: "Let not loyalty and faithfulness forsake you, bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man." (Proverbs 3: 3-4)

The Words

A Hootowl	M Thrush
B Canary	N Oriole
C Eagle	O Fluffy
D Titmouse	P Nutty
E Tanager	Q Mudhen
F Dodo	R Bluebird
G Pheasant	S Kite
H Feathers	T Loon
I Robin	U Tuft
J Dove	V Softly
K Hawk	W Annoy
L Flamingo	X Dine
	Y Dotty

BOOKS for the hearthsides

For Children

Mary Alice Jones, well-known writer of children's books, has added another book to her popular and well-loved "Tell Me" Series. This one is *Tell Me About Christmas* (Rand McNally and Co., 1958, 72 pp., \$2.50). Beginning with happy family experiences that may occur at any time of year, the author helps boys and girls to understand the deep spiritual meaning of Christmas. Every family should use this book to prepare for Christmas. It will make a good Christmas gift, too. This is a beautiful book: jacket, end papers, four-color and black-and-white drawings by Marjorie Cooper add to one's delight in reading it.

Children from three to seven years of age will enjoy *God Gave Us Seasons*, by Carolyn Muller Wolcott (Abingdon Press, 1958, unpage, \$1.25). Bobby is quick to hear and see things about him. As he and his mother talk about them, he learns about the seasons. He learns, too, that the orderly dependable pattern in the seasons is part of God's plan for the world. The illustrations by Meg Wohlberg add substance to the brief text.

A Christmas counting book by Joan Gale Thomas is called *One Little Baby* (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., 1956, unpage, \$1.00). The numbers to be counted are from 1 to 10, and each one is applied to some part of the Christmas story. Planned for use with very young children, the language is far from childlike. Some persons may object to

the precise number the author has applied to some elements of the story.

reading for the entire family will be found in this book.

For Young People

Boy Scouts who do not merely "play at being Indians," but who study and publicize the culture of the southwest Indians are the heroes of *Behind the Zuni Masks*, by Val Gendron (Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., New York, 1958, 214 pages, \$3). Charlie Nickerson, a Yankee Boy Scout who bemoans his luck in having to move from his New England home to La Junta, Colorado, discovers a new enthusiasm in learning and performing Indian dances with the Koshare Scout Troop. When the boys learn and perform the Shalako dance of the Zunis Indians they get into trouble when the Zunis object to their sacred dance being given as a show. How the problem is ironed out will keep the reader interested to the end.

Stories of exploration under land and sea make up the contents of *Below the Surface*, by Alice I. Hazeltine, (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1958, 223 pages, \$3.95). This collection of short stories of real experiences carries as much or more excitement than fiction. Adventure, suspense, and daring are exhibited in accounts of mining, skin-diving, searching for treasure, exploring caves from Solomon's mines to the Canadian woods, from below the Hudson River to the depths of the Pacific. Good

For Adults

Helen Topping Miller has made available another of her charming little Christmas-with-the-Great books. *Christmas at Mount Vernon* (Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1957, 58 pages, \$2.50) is an account of the Christmas following George Washington's farewell to his army. Mrs. Miller gives a delightful description of Christmas traditions and festivities as they took place at the close of the long hard war for freedom. The Washingtons are portrayed in a warm and human light that reveals them more as tired, elderly people who deserve a long rest after arduous labors, but who were soon called to guide the infant nation on its first faltering steps.

The experiences of new Americans in the land of their choice are always interesting. *Shadows into Mist*, by Ellen Turngren (Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1958, 207 pages, \$3), tells the story of Lovisa Lund, a pretty, high-spirited Swedish girl who came to Minnesota in the 1880's. It gives a realistic picture of the difficulties and hardships that many newcomers face when they come to the "land of the free." Lovisa's marriage to Nils Enberg and their struggle to adjust themselves to each other and the new country make an absorbing story.

A Doll for Christina

(Continued from page 21)

where have you been?"

"Watering the young plantings," answered Pedro. "What are you doing?"

Maria slumped down on an old crate. "I don't know. I told Christina about the baby Jesus, like I learned at the Mission, and how St. Nicholas comes on Christmas Eve and brings toys to all the good little children. And now," Maria's voice broke, "Christina has hung up her stocking. She wants a dolly."

"I see," said Pedro.

"Christina looks to me for everything. Mama is so busy with the vegetables. I can't fail her now." Maria put her head down on the old crate and sobbed.

"Why did you not come to your big brother? Don't you know he is the greatest magician—"

"Don't tease me, Pedro," interrupted Maria. "I feel bad enough."

"Then don't you cry. I will help you make a dolly for little Christina."

Maria looked up quickly. "Will you, Pedro? I thought of a stick doll, but I don't know how to make one."

"Neither do I," grinned Pedro. "But I know how to carve," and he began rummaging through the scrap lumber.

"Oh, Pedro!" exclaimed Maria delighted.

"How's this?" asked Pedro, as he held out a piece of wood.

"It will not go in her stocking," mused Maria, "but it will be just right for her to hold in her arms."

"Well, I'll see what I can do," said Pedro, getting out his knife and sitting down by the candle. "You can make the fine clothes for it."

"They may not be fine, but I can make a little dress," Maria smiled, "and maybe a bonnet."

"What's all the chatter about?" another voice sounded, as a tall figure came into the candlelight.

"Oh, Mama," Maria turned to the older woman. "I'm sorry we woke you up. Christina hung up her stocking." Then she explained

what they were trying to do.

"Good," said her mother. "I am so glad you found out about the baby Jesus. It has been good for all of us. We will help, too. There is a little of the wild honey left. I can make sweetmeats, and Papa can make a cradle for the dolly."

Maria caught her breath in a little happy squeal.

"Can I use a little of the pink stuff in the old chest for a dress, Mama?" asked Maria. "Christina loves pink."

"Sure, sure," her mother nodded. "I will wake Papa. We must hurry."

In a few minutes, a man in faded work clothes came into the shed. "What is this yet, a conspiracy?"

"Yeah," grinned Pedro. "For little Christina."

"Ah, these younger generations have the new-fangled ideas. How big a cradle?" he asked, peering down at the wood Pedro was carving.

"Not too big," answered Pedro, holding it up so his father could see.

They worked through the night. When the early morning sun sent its first rays through the door of the shed, a handmade cradle, holding a doll dressed in rosy pink, stood in its soft beams. A plate of sweetmeats was on the box by the burnt-out candle. The whole family was putting the last touches on their handiwork, when a little white-gowned figure slipped in silently, rubbing her eyes.

Maria," said Christina reaching for her sister. "You were not in my bed."

"I know, Baby," Maria put her arm around Christina and drew her closer to the cradle. "Look! St. Nicholas *did* bring you a dolly."

"Oh," sighed Christina with rapture. "A real dolly!"

"It was too big to go in your stocking," explained Maria, "so he made a cradle for it. St. Nicholas did not forget you."

"Of course not." Christina leaned over the cradle and lifting the doll tenderly, cuddled it in her arms. She looked up, the light of faith shining in her dark eyes. "I

knew the good St. Nicholas would bring a dolly for little Christina!"

Maria looked at Pedro, Mama, and Papa. It was hard to tell who was the happier—Christina or her family!

Study Guide

(Continued from page 24)

Christian concepts discovered by the group.

Summary:

The leader may wish to recommend certain resource material suggested below. An appropriate conclusion is the reading of the story of "True Greatness" as found in Matthew 20:20-28.

Resource Material:

Stewardship and Your Family, by Florence M. Sly, Christian Board of Publication.

The Family in a Money World, by Frances L. Feldman, Family Service Association, New York.

The Mind Alive, by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, W. W. Norton, New York.

Chapters on "Living With Our Limitations," "Growth Toward Belonging," "The Faith That Health Makes."

The Recovery of Family Life, by Elton and Pauline Trueblood, Harper & Brothers, New York.

Chapter on "Sources of Family Strength."

WILBUR



"Let's get the necessities first."



Family Counselor

Q. There have been many times that I have thought I would write to you about various things that have come up in the rearing of our four boys, who are now 11, 8, 6, and almost 2. We live in a community of about one thousand in which most of the population belong to a very conservative church. The school is almost entirely manned by members of this church. I have noticed that our boys have acquired a new praying vocabulary—"Thank you for sending your Son into the world to die on the cross for us and save us from our many, many sins." It's ludicrous to hear a little six-year-old praying such a prayer, but I know it is what the teachers say in their devotions which they have every day. I have sort of drifted along doing nothing about the theology they have been hearing and continuing to talk my way to them.

However, an incident occurred today that set me to wondering if I ought not plan a counterattack. I mentioned to a member of this church some remark my eight-year-old had made that I thought cute. She was immediately concerned, and thought he must be struggling against the Lord, that he was "lost." She has a son nine and said she believes he is lost and that the Lord is trying to win him and he is battling with it.

She then asked me if I didn't want a book to read to my son, and I said, "No." However, she went and got it and I had to bring it home. I was horrified when I began to look into it. It was all about children being lost, lost, separated forever from God, un-

til they had this salvation experience. People who have never heard of God are also lost. On and on it goes, trying to prove everything by quoting Scripture.

Now the thing that suddenly dawned on me is that that is what my children are being taught. Their religious expressions indicate some of it. They don't use the prayer language that I use with them. It's these old worn-out phrases that I mentioned to you before. I cringe at the thought of these things.

How would you deal with this problem?

A. It seems to me you are approaching your situation in a constructive way. Children need to realize that people think differently about religion and it is well that they discover this while they are at home and have the stabilizing influence of their parents.

As you answer their questions and give your own viewpoints, it is perfectly permissible for you to say that because you believe as you do, you do not feel that many of the ideas they are hearing from others are correct. In a sense, then, you are suggesting that those

who hold these ideas are wrong. But you really feel that they are wrong, don't you? As you do this, however, be certain to stress also that these other people have a right to their own beliefs. Try to create a certain amount of tolerance of other viewpoints in your children, at the same time that you are sharing with them your own insights.

In your conversations with your children help them realize that as they go to church school and get older, they will be finding out even more about God and how he works in the world. Give them the feeling that this finding out about God is a lifelong quest, a thrilling one that brings satisfaction and zest. Let them know, too, that you want them to do their own thinking and reach their own conclusions.

Your son's prayer is evidence of the fact that you are handling the situation wisely. Sharing your own religious insights, encouraging your children to think for themselves, capturing spontaneous moments of worship, and surrounding them with helpful literature, will provide them with that kind of home atmosphere that will make wholesome religious growth and living possible.

Donald M. Maynard

OVER THE BACK FENCE

A World of "No Place for Them"?

Jesus was born in a "barn" because there was no place available in the Bethlehem Inn for Joseph and Mary of Nazareth. Because there was no place *for them* there was no place *for him* who was born that night so long ago.

At the risk of being charged with some "twisting of the Scriptures" we propose to take a closer look at the two words "for them" in the light of a modern situation that grows increasingly troublesome. Many think it not only troublesome but threatening to the future of mankind.

Let us think of those words, "for them," as applying to the millions of babies that are born each year in the world. Students of population problems are telling us that of the increase of babies there will be no end. That increase will grow greater each year by leaps and bounds.

Our question then, is, "Will there be no place for them?"

In the western hemisphere this is not yet a crucial problem. Even in the United States, where as of now, over 11,000 babies are born every day we are not too worried, yet, as to space for them. We have a lot of room to expand. However, there are many countries where it is not too far wrong to say that "Standing Room Only" is the rule. The density of population is so severe that there is almost literally *no place* for those increasing numbers of new arrivals.

"No place for them" also can be interpreted to mean "no food for them." Again, the United States is not too much troubled by lack of food, especially for babies. For most babies, that is. Of course, we still have many ba-

bies whose parents cannot afford to purchase the best foods that are available in excess supply. In other lands, however, scarcity of food for the teeming millions is the common experience. Probably half or more of the world's total population go to bed hungry every night.

By A.D. 2000 population experts tell us the world census will be over 5 billion. If permitted to continue unchecked, such increase will be not merely troublesome, it will be calamitous!

Before the present century, population was kept at a slower pace of increase by many factors. War took a large toll of human life. (Of course, since 1900 war has been more effective as a killer but still population increases.) Starvation took a large share of human life. Disease and pestilence played a significant part in limiting population increase.

No one advocates resorting to these measures for keeping world population within manageable limits. Even though thoughts of war during this time of "peace, good will" are abhorrent, it probably is the method most threatening in our world situation. An atomically waged war would certainly deplete the population figures in record time.

What is the solution to this urgent problem?

The Bible does not tell us. The account of creation in Genesis 1 portrays the Creator as enjoining the male and female he has created to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill [replenish] the earth and subdue it." It does not seem that God means for his creatures to overpopulate the earth, to so crowd it that there will be "no place for them." To fill it, yes; to replenish it, yes; to turn it into an anthill or beehive, no.

Are these strange thoughts to be thinking at Christmas? Perhaps, but they are thoughts which will face parents in the years to come. It would be well for us to begin thinking of them now, and helping our children to think about them.

"That there be a place for them."

Poetry Page

Christmas Story

In Bethlehem a star
Shone long ago,
Proclaiming glad news with
Its radiant glow.

"A Savior has been born,"
The angels sang.
And in the air their
Joyous tidings rang.

The Christ is born again
Each Christmastide,
Where love and peace in
Good men's hearts abide.

—Sue H. Wollam

Caution: Children at Play

The floor is mined with jacks and skates,
Speeding trucks and whizzing freights;
Cowpokes gallop, space ships zoom—
G-men shoot from room to room.
Only parents on alert
Pass such dangerous ground unhurt.

—Ida M. Pardue

Not as Stately Kings

Though Bethlehem is never far away,
Each one, to find the Christ, must surely seek
As earnestly as Wise Men did of old
Who knelt and worshiped with glad hearts and meek
And not as stately kings. How resolute
They proved themselves on paths they would pursue!
May such devotion to their quest inspire
The world with eagerness to find him, too.

—Clarice Foster Booth

Christmas Thoughts of a New Mother

The Christmas season means to me
A different thing this time,
For something very wonderful
Has made my joy sublime.

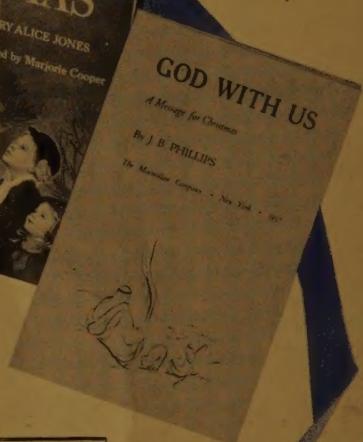
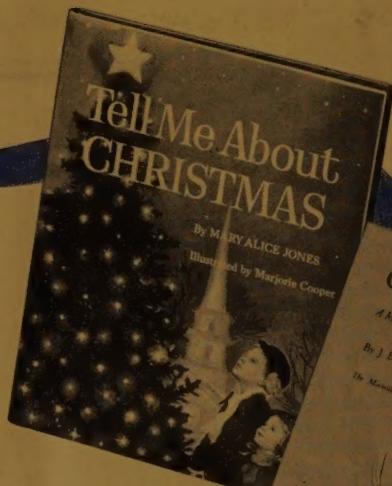
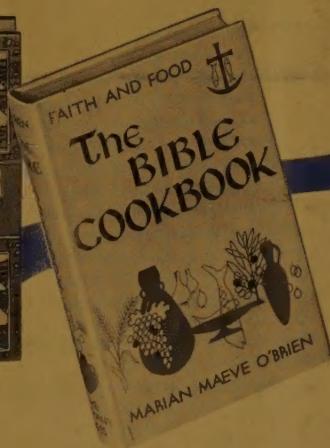
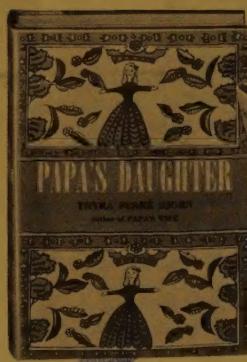
This year I cradle in my arms
A baby wee and new,
Like Mary must have known that night,
I feel God's blessing too.

Like Mary I must cultivate
This seed that God has sown,
Oh, may I too fulfill my task
That when my child is grown

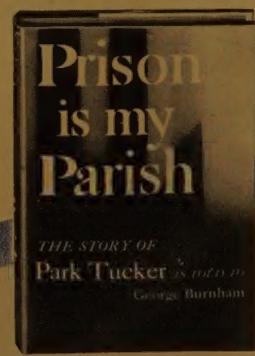
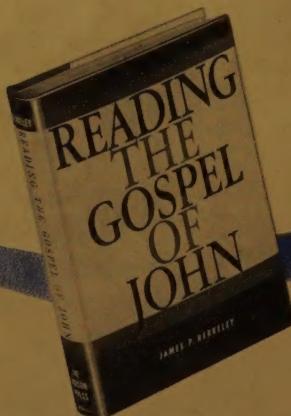
He shall be strong enough to face
The challenge of his time,
And I can watch him from afar,
Humbly proud he's mine.

—Merial B. Cisson

Merry Christmas!



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taste and
fancy . . .



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